

WEST HILL COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES - May 20, 2008



On May 20, 2008 the City of Auburn Mayor and City staff met with neighbors of the West Hill Community at Evergreen Heights Elementary, 5602 South 316th Street.

Staff in Attendance: MAYOR PETE LEWIS, DUANNA RICHARDS, KIRSTEN REYNOLDS, LARRY MILLER, LESLIE LEHNHOFF, TIFFIN GOODMAN, BOB WUOTILA, DON STEPHENS, ELIZABETH CHAMBERLAIN, DENNIS DOWDY, JOE WELSH AND SETH WICKSTROM.

Community Members in Attendance: AMY HOOPER, BOB RUTHERFORD, BOB SEEGMUELIER, BRIAN WINSLOW, CURTIS & TANA CLEMONS, EDWARD RAYMOND, GARY ANDERSON, GERALD & TERESA DUHAMEL, JEANNE HICKS, JEFF ROBSON & AMY KIILSHOLM, JOHN CALRAN, JOYCE BRUNS, JOYCE GREER, JULIA MONKMAN, KEVIN MCMANIS, KIM JACOBSON, KIM SHIPPEY, LISA SCHEUER, MABEL MANN, NANCY & RON NEWENHOF, NORMAN VOELPEL, PHIL & NANCY LATVALA, PRUDENCE KANTZ, RALPH & VIRGINIA SHUCK, ROBIN MORRIS, ROMANA PERHAU, RON COPPLE, SALLY COWAN, STEVE MAYER, TERRY WARNER, THOMAS JONES, TIM DICKINSON, TOM & MICKEY OBRIEN, VIRGINIA NOON, YOUNG SEO.

Welcome and Introductions:

Community Services Manager Duanna Richards opened the meeting with a brief outline of the meeting and introductions of City staff and Mayor Pete Lewis. Mayor Lewis facilitated the audience participation portion of the meeting opening the floor to anyone wanting to discuss issues other than the Transportation Plan. A few opening comments included, but were not limited to:

- 911 – Mayor Lewis informed the residents that Auburn shares ownership of the 911 system, calls go into a dispatch center so residents shouldn't worry about tying up the phone line when making non-emergency calls. Residents were advised to call 911 for any emergency or non-emergency issue such as street lights out, stop lights out, missing stop signs, fireworks, loose dogs, sewer backups, water leaks, etc.
- Taking over annexation areas – The City received approximately \$1.7 million from King County to provide services to the Lea Hill and West Hill annexation areas. Mayor clarified \$160,000 of the funding would stay in West Hill area.
- Kid safety in school zones – Mayor Lewis talked about the importance of partnering with the school district to ensure safe routes on busy streets for kids.
- Cool Cities Pledge – The Mayor's Pledge was to participate in more energy efficient ways to conduct business. Currently, the City of Auburn is using hybrid vehicles, bio-diesel and reducing use of lights.

Public Works:

Stop Signs and Traffic Lights –

- One resident spoke about a traffic light that was supposed to be installed at 316th and 51st Street as a condition of a previously approved plat.
- There was discussion regarding the cost of roundabouts versus stoplights; the cost is about the same, although roundabouts are sometimes less if property acquisition is not required. It was stated that stop signs are much less expensive than stop lights or roundabouts but State law requires a traffic study first to determine if it's warranted.

Sidewalks and Curbs –

- Sidewalks – City Council established a fund some years ago to pay up to 50% of the cost of sidewalks if the majority of property owners formed a Local Improvement District (LID) and agree to have the sidewalks installed on their streets. Sidewalks are the responsibility of the homeowners, and the City of Auburn now requires them on all new developments, but offers the option of an LID to pay for half the cost in previously developed areas lacking sidewalks.

Speeding –

- Issues with speeding cars were reported at 46th Street. Residents would like to see the speed limit lowered. Mayor Lewis talked about the need for drivers to maintain common courtesy; talking to neighbors can help enforce this overall neighborhood responsibility. City staff will come out to discuss this issue in smaller groups.
- There were reports of drag racing on 56th Street happening at night. Residents were advised to call 911 to report this type of activity.

Streets -

- West Main Street got upgraded because of a grant which the City refers to as “OPM” (Other People’s Money). Built into the grant were requirements for an upgraded pedestrian path, bike lanes and a public art element.
- Connectivity issues – residents reported a lack of road infrastructure which makes it hard to get around.
- Residents reported that 51st Street has become a major arterial to 320th; they would like to focus on creating new arterials as new developments are coming in. A few streets mentioned where development is taking place were: 46th Street, 51st Street, 16th Street, 321st Street and 328th Street. The City will charge new development impact fees that will be put towards road capacity projects.

Utilities -

- A resident asked why City employees were surveying the area behind Evergreen Elementary; Mayor Lewis responded that the employees were surveying the watersheds located behind Evergreen Elementary in relation to a Public Works project that will install a perimeter fence around the site.
- Tax increase concerns – a concerned resident questioned the storm water billing. Mayor Lewis responded that prior to annexation City staff compared bills side by side, the differences residents are seeing now come from the fact that the City breaks out all of the bills while the County lumped them all together in the annual property tax bill. Mayor explained that there were a few things happening that were reflected on the billing which included:
 - 1) There is a King County charge still being reflected on the property tax statement for stormwater system. This charge is related to debt issued by the County to improve the County’s storm drainage system. The charge will be in effect until the debt is retired in approximately 2020. The City is now billing for stormwater services on a monthly basis and the charge is \$11.50 per month or \$138 annually. Prior to the annexation the County charged \$119 a year for stormwater services. The ongoing charge for the debt is about \$12 per year.
 - 2) There is a new charge on the King County property tax statement which is county wide and is for the county wide flood control zone. This is a new tax and would have been charged regardless of whether the annexation occurred or not.
- Septic versus sewer – residents who have septic will not be charged for sewer but storm charges will apply.
- Lakehaven Water will continue to be used as the main water source for residents.

Code Enforcement Issues:

- Bulldozers and semi trucks are not allowed to park on the street. Mayor Lewis asked people to call 911 to report this type of activity.
- There were noise and bright light complaints regarding the Comcast facility located at 58th and 322nd (NW of Cemetery).

Police:

- Police - calls are prioritized with threat to life or property first. There are 114 dedicated officers currently on staff and at least six cars to cover the entire city during any one shift.
- Speeding on 305th Street was reported to be an issue. Mayor Lewis explained that officers could not be stationed at any one given location to catch speeders; however, there are target missions when hot spots start to be a recurring issue.
- Auburn doesn't allow fireworks, if they go up or blow up, they are illegal. Residents should reported fireworks to the 911 line.

Planning & Building:

- Residents were concerned that 46th Street would be permanently closed and traffic routed through their neighborhood due to a new housing development. Mayor Lewis clarified the developers could not do this on their own; they need to have permission from the City.
- Permitting questions can be answered by looking on the City's website; the process to obtain permits is listed under the business tab, then under permits & licenses.
- Mayor Lewis invited people to attend Council Committee meetings such as Planning and Community Development Committee and Public Works Committee. These meeting dates and times are posted on the City's on-line calendar.
- Auburn is required to allow projects previously approved and permitted by King County prior to the annexation.
- One goal of the City is to retrofit storm ponds by turning them into more natural environments that could possibly be used as community open space.

In Closing:

- Mayor talked about a few up and coming things, including, but not limited to:
 - The Valley Six drive-in property - there will be 500,000-700,000 sq. ft. for new mixed-use development.
 - A new Super Wal-Mart location - next to the Movie Theaters at the SuperMall; six months after it is completed the old Wal-Mart building must be converted or demolished.
 - The Hospital parking garage - permits are scheduled to come in by July 1st.
 - The old "tavern block" – these buildings will be torn down to make way for the new City Annex building.
 - Auburn Junction - four blocks south of City Hall are being planned for mixed use development.
- Cultural issues – Mayor Lewis talked about the importance of the West Hill residents becoming a part of Auburn. One goal of the new Cultural Diversity Liaison is to bring the new and the old areas of Auburn together for community events to build an inclusive community.
- Community Services Manager Duanna Richards invited residents to call or e-mail the Community Services Team if they have any questions or concerns and aren't sure who to call at the City. Contact information for the Community Services Division is: 253-931-3099 or drichards@auburnwa.gov.

- Transportation Planner Tiffin Goodman spoke about the long range Transportation Plan; the Plan identifies future needs out to 2030 for motorized and non-motorized routes. There will be a total of three community meetings and one open house to finalize the Transportation Plan; the open house will be held in August at City Hall. Ms. Goodman announced there were on-line surveys available for residents to provide comments. The survey deadline will be towards the end of June. A public hearing will be held at a regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting in the fall; City Council will look at adopting the proposed Transportation Plan by the end of the 2008.